

Discussion Points

A Foundation Meeting – Back To The Basics.

Slide 1 What does it mean to be alcoholic, what is the solution to alcoholism, why is the big book so important, and what is this program of action that we talk about? How are we supposed to get to this solution? - Those are the questions we intend to answer with this meeting.

* AA has one single purpose to help alcoholics recover from alcoholism. (outside issues)

* This is Alcoholics Anonymous. - We don't talk about who we see in AA. We don't discuss what someone else talked about.

* AA is not governed by anybody. Anyone can say anything in an AA meeting. Because of that, what you hear in an AA meeting may not be in line with the original message as outlined by our founders.

Slide 2 Fully concede – surrender. This surrender has to happen in order for you to move forward. To fully concede/Surrender that you are alcoholic, you need to know what that means and lay your experience up against that and see if that's who you are.

Slide 3 Alcoholism does not mean that you drink all the time, does not mean that you drink more than anyone, does not mean that you are weak-willed, does not necessarily mean that you have an addictive personality. Alcoholism does not mean that you are homeless, that you've been to jail, that you have lost everything or suffered any other specific consequence.

If alcoholism doesn't mean those things, then what does it mean?

Slide 4 What is it that we all have in common? - An alcoholic lacks control over his/her drinking.

Slide 5 At the time they wrote the book it was called an illness. Today, it's recognized as a disease. Chronic means You will die with it, or from it. Progressive means it continues to worsen over time.
*1959 – AMA recognizes alcoholism as a disease.

Dr. Silkworth & The Doctor's Opinion

The common opinion and misconception in the world and in the medical community was/is that drunks are drunk because they choose to drink to excess.

But the doctors work lead him to suspect that there was something different about alcoholics. They were not able to control their drinking. They could not stop drinking on the basis of self-will or self-knowledge alone.

When this book was written, the definition of allergy in the old dictionary was simply: an abnormal reaction. When I put alcohol in my body, I have an abnormal reaction. So how does this allergy manifest/show up? I develop a craving that is beyond my control. The first drink demands the second, which demands the third, which demands the fourth. The craving increases with each drink.

And frequently, it looks like I just changed my mind. I went in to have a couple with the boys after work, and after a couple, I changed my mind. How about three or four? How about another fifteen minutes? And it goes on and on like that.

Slide 6 Dr. Silkworth gives us the solution to an alcohol problem. He says, "*The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence.*" - Then why, can't we just not take the first drink?

Slide 7 That's a good statement to turn into a question. Does your experience abundantly confirm, that once you put alcohol into your body, it's virtually impossible to stop drinking?

Slide 8 What is this "problem of the mind," that always leads us to take the first drink?

Slide 9 By the time I began trying to quit, it was too late. I wasn't capable of it. The fact is, that most alcoholics have lost the power of choice in drink.

Slide 10 So not only do I have no control over my drinking once I've started, at times, I have no defense against the first drink. - "*We are unable at certain times...*" - I can turn down a drink sometimes. But not every time. And that's a big misunderstanding in some AA. This idea that you can put the plug in the jug, or if you don't take the first drink, you won't get drunk, or just don't drink no matter what, illustrates a misunderstanding of what's wrong with us.

Slide 11 Page 30 - "*The idea that somehow, someday, he'll control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker.*" I got a mind that tells me I got this. And it's hard to dismiss that when my own voice is telling me that I can drink If I do it this way or that way.

That voice doesn't always just say hey let's go drink. It says things like you don't need to tell anybody about this, I know you haven't been to a meeting in a while but you're okay, you can handle this one you don't need to write the inventory. My alcoholism is cunning, baffling and powerful in trying to separate me from recovery.

I do the most insane thing I could possibly do, stone cold sober. I pick up another drink and take another run at it.

Slide 12 The spiritual malady. Not exclusive to alcoholics but we all suffer from it. Roman Numeral 28, in the doctor's opinion, he's describing a sober alcoholic. This is me when I'm sober. He says they are restless, irritable, and discontented.

Slide 13 When I'm not drinking, in the beginning, things seem to be going well. I'm talking to family again, I've paid my bills, but something starts to build inside of me. I begin to feel anxious. I'm easily agitated. I experience a general lack of satisfaction with my life as it is. Over time these feelings increase until unbearable. But I intuitively know that a drink will at once bring a sense of ease and comfort from these overwhelming feelings. And a couple drinks, become a lot like a spiritual experience.

Slide 14 Alcohol's not your problem. It's your answer. That's why it's so hard to quit. I'm not coming to you saying, give up this terrible thing that's causing all your problems. I'm saying, give up the thing that makes this world okay for you.

Slide 15 We live in this cycle. We take the first drink, it develops a craving, physical allergy. Then as I continue to drink, I suffer consequences, I feel remorse. I make a resolution to stop. I began to feel restless irritable and discontent. The obsession returns. A voice is telling me, You can take a drink, quitting was probably an overreaction. And when that obsessions returns, it's only a matter of time before we take the first drink. And the cycle repeats.

Slide 17 Nothing (sufficient reason, fear, consequences, etc) is enough to keep you sober on your own power.

Slide 18 "...cannot quit entirely." - That's powerless over the first drink. "... have a little control over the amount you take," - that's powerless over the second, third, fourth...

Slide 19 This book starts with identification. We learn that it's written by people like us. It explains the problem. It offers up a solution that truly works, and then it gives me a clear cut set of instructions on how to get there. This book is how to have a spiritual experience and as a result become relieved of the obsession to drink.

Slide 21 If we take these steps, whether we believe it's going to work or not, we have this experience and it's been confirmed by thousands and thousands of alcoholics.

Slide 22 AA was half religious and half agnostic and it's been rolling right along ever since.

Slide 23 We're not going to tell you what to believe. You can believe whatever you want as long as you can take it through this process. Our suggestion to you is take whatever it is that you believe now and lay that aside. Follow these instructions and then tell us what you believe after you've had this experience.

Slide 24 I'm either thinking about drinking or not drinking – no longer applies.

Slide 26 Even if all you've ever heard is what we've discussed right here in this meeting, you have a message to carry.